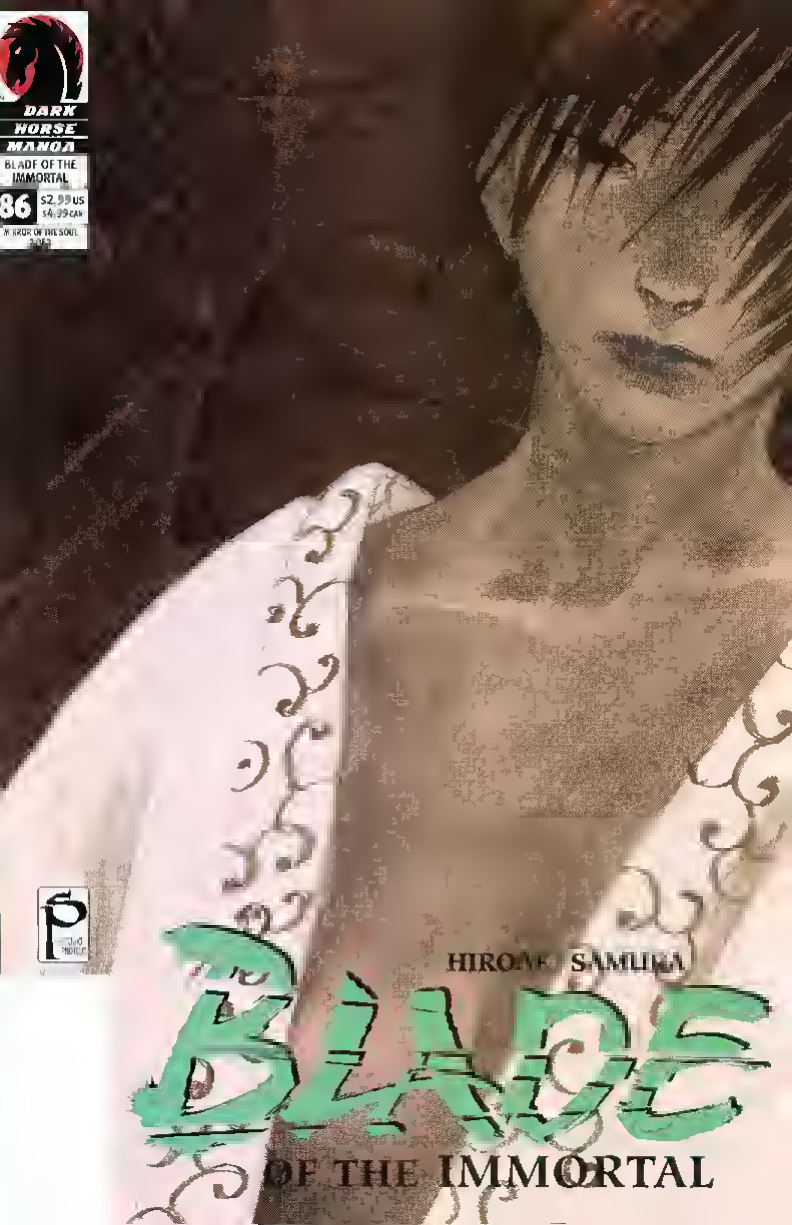
DARK
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MANGA
BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
86
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MIRROR OF THE SOUL
HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
OF THE IMMORTAL

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

CAST OF CHARACTERS

gumbo-
Immortal Scanner

yuneha
Nice enough to distro the stuff

THE STORY SO FAR

- Series: Blade of the Immortal
- Date: 2004.03.07
- Volume: 13?
- Chapter: 086 [Mirror of the Soul 2 of 3]
- Format: Left to Right
- pages: 00 28 (28 jpgs w/cover)
- Size: 7.87MB
- Source: Dark Horse Montly Issues (UPC 6156895340)
- Last Rls: GTO v14c05

No letters section in this issue

ENJOY!

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by

DANA LEWIS and TOREN SMITH

lettering and retouch by

TOMOKO SAITO

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI
Immortal *rōnin*

RIN
Last heir of the Mutenichi *ryū dojō* destroyed by Itō *ryū*

ANOTSU
The leader of the Itō-*ryū* sword school

MAKIE
Former Itto ryu swordswoman and geisha

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessenchu* mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister To atone for the 100 good people who died at his hand under his corrupted lord Manji vowed to slay 1 000 evil men in exchange for the release of death

Two years earlier when her parents were murdered on her fourteenth birthday by Anotsu Kagehisa's Itto-*ryu* swordsmen Rin Asano became part of a mad revenge cycle which began when Anotsu's grandfather was thrown out of the Asano clan's Mutenichi-*ryu dojo* fifty years before A quest for vengeance was instilled in Anotsu a similar quest now haunts Rin Upon learning of Manji she enlisted his aid to destroy the Itto-*ryu* and avenge her parents

After leaving Manji to complete her quest alone Rin prevails over great hardships and comes into a strange unsteady alliance with Anotsu in order to survive while on the inn in Kaga Assassins surprise them but are quickly cut down by Anotsu's unique weapon Discovering that these assassins are his ally's students Anotsu runs back to Kensui's sword school for an explanation Unable to deal with the fact that the he was forced to betray Anotsu Kensui commits suicide

as does Hisoka Anotsu's new wife Rin and Anotsu are now trying to flee Kaga with a band of Kensui's students on their trail stopping only when Anotsu tracks down his heart's true desire Makie a much respected swordswoman who once bested Manji in battle

designer DEBRA BAILEY editor PHILIP W. SIMON publisher MIKE RICHARDSON

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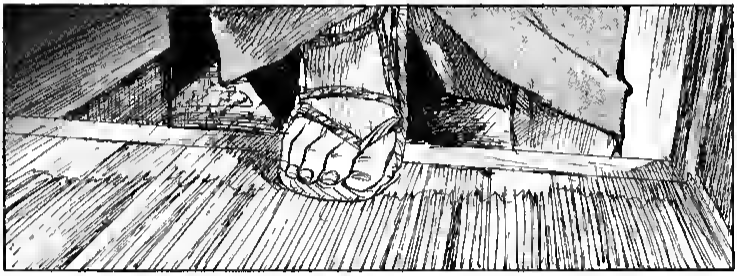
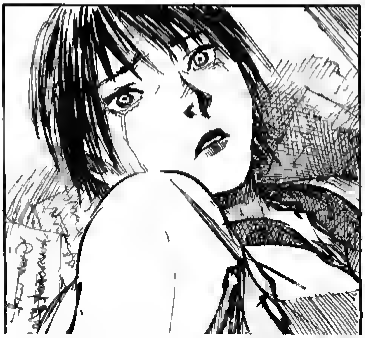
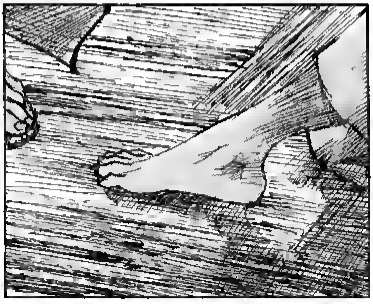
無限の住人

MIRROR OF THE SOUL

- part two -

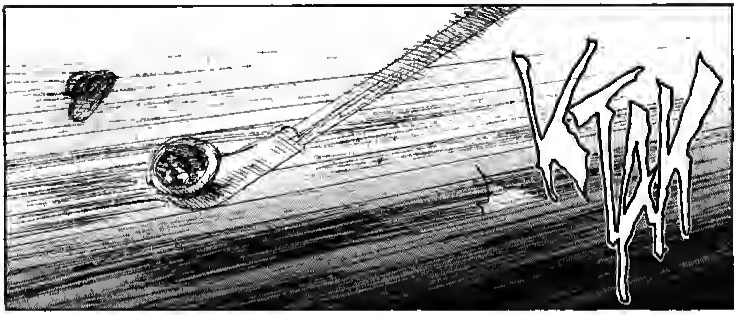


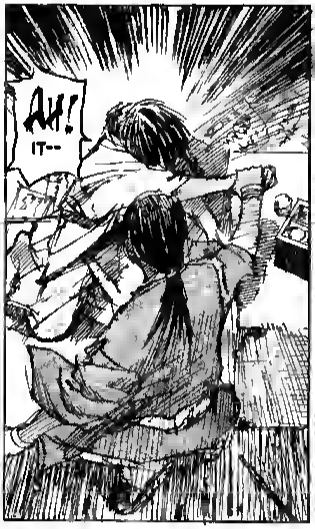




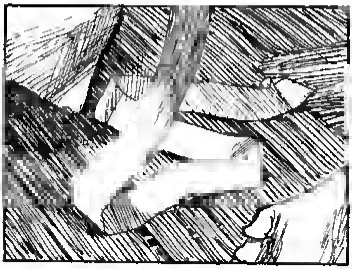
THAP

.....
.....
.....?


KTAK


AH!
IT--

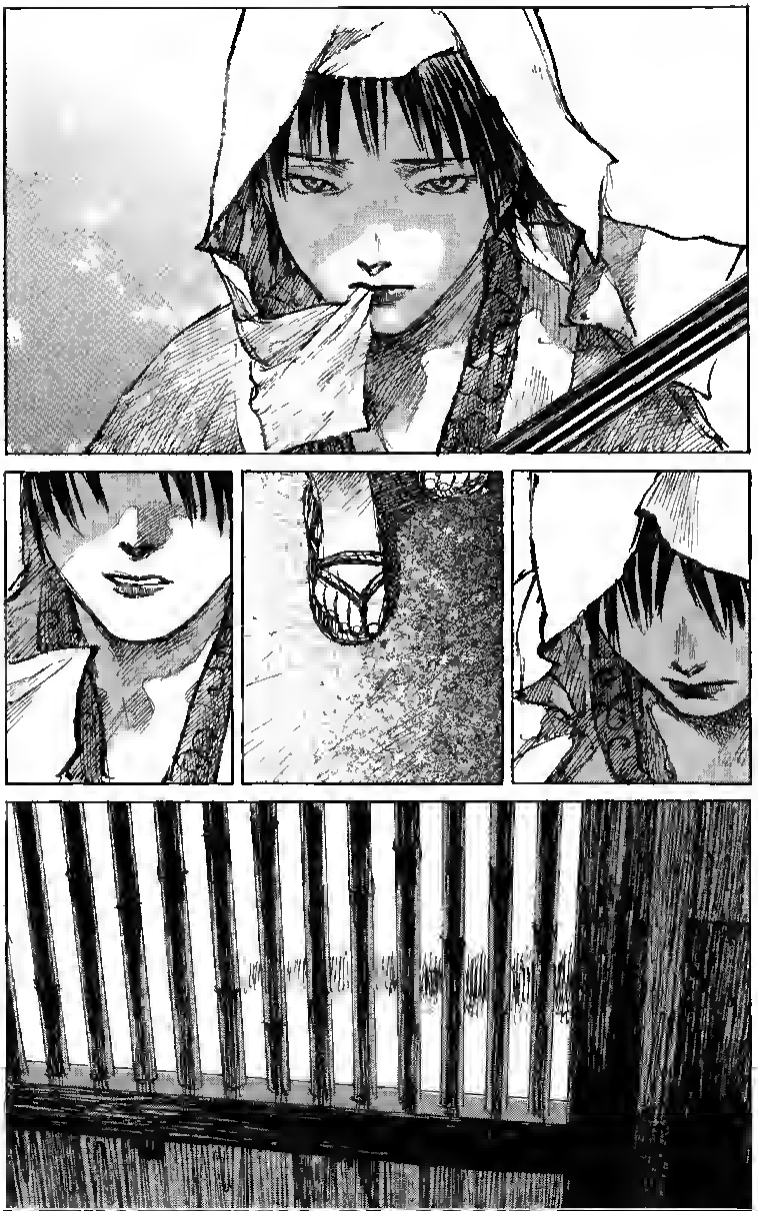
IT...
HURTS...



HAVE YOU LOST YOUR *MIND*...?!
WHAT'S *THIS* SUPPOSED TO ACCOMPLISH?!
IF GANGRENE SETS IN, YOU'LL NEVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO--

I DON'T CARE IF I CAN'T!
NO... NO! THAT'S HOW IT HAS TO BE!
IT... IT HAS TO, OR... OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME AS JUST...
...JUST A PERSON.
LIVING, DYING...
OH, KAGEHISA-SAMA...! I...I'VE FAILED AT EVERY-THING.

KILLING, SPARING...
HATING, FORGIVING...
EVERY-THING!

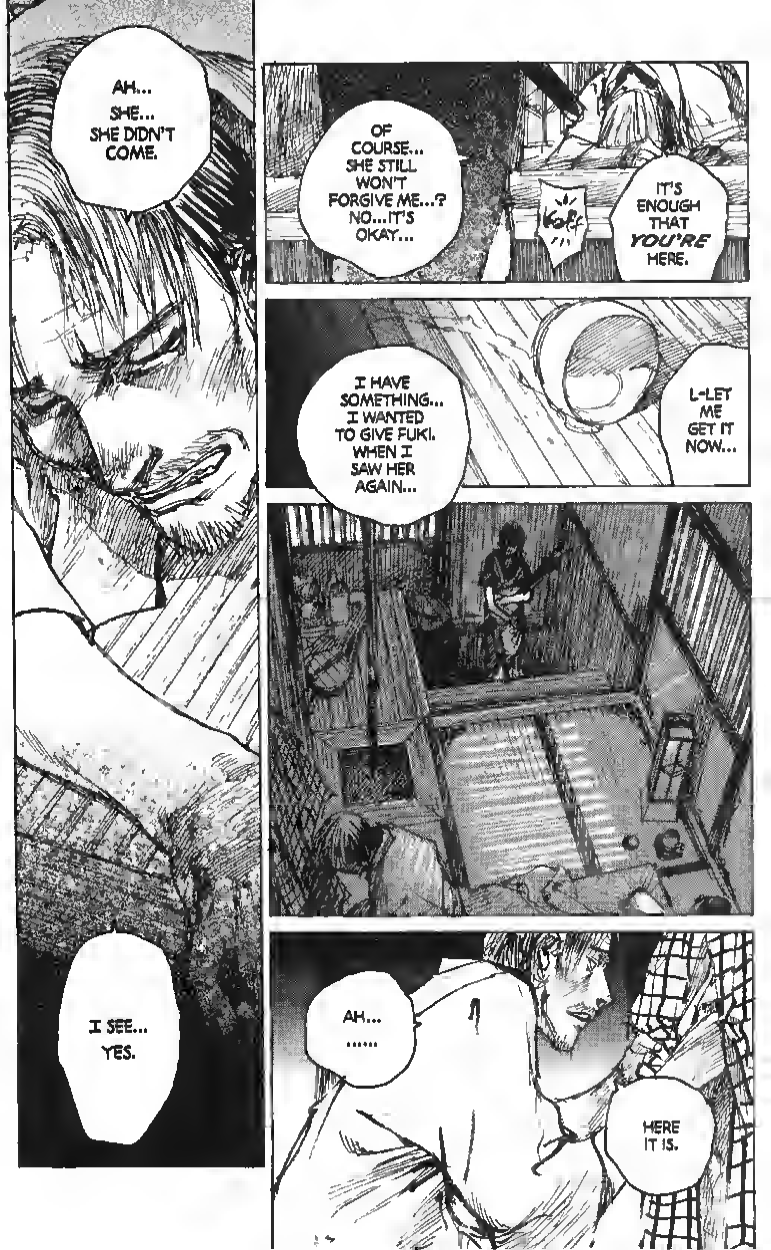


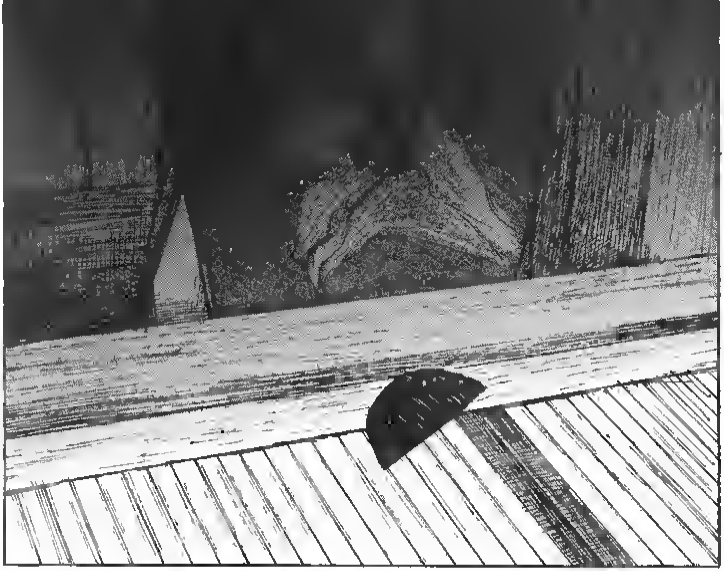
:kof:
:khkk:
:kof:

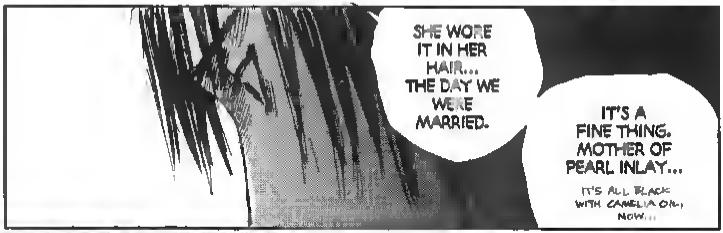
?!
WHO IS IT?!
HELLO, FATHER.

EH...?
.....
.....
MAKIE...?
ARE YOU... MAKIE?
.....
.....
YES.
NNG...
.....
AAH... NO...
C-CAN IT BE...?
M-... MAKIE...?!

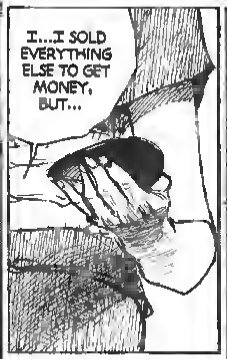
HOW... HOW DID YOU FIND ME?!
KOFF!!
KOFF
ANOTHER DREAM...?
...RIGHT?!
F... FUKI...? FUKI'S WITH YOU...
...ISN'T SHE, MAKIE ..?
YOUR MOTHER IS WITH YOU...


AH...
SHE...
SHE DIDN'T COME.
I SEE...
YES.
OF COURSE...
SHE STILL WON'T FORGIVE ME...?
NO...IT'S OKAY...
Golf
IT'S ENOUGH THAT YOU'RE HERE.
I HAVE SOMETHING... I WANTED TO GIVE FUKI. WHEN I SAW HER AGAIN...
L-LET ME GET IT NOW...
AH...
.....
HERE IT IS.




SHE WORE IT IN HER HAIR... THE DAY WE WERE MARRIED.
IT'S A FINE THING. MOTHER OF PEARL INLAY...
IT'S ALL BLACK WITH CAMELLIA ON NOW...

.....
.....


I...I SOLD EVERYTHING ELSE TO GET MONEY, BUT...

...I COULD NEVER LET THAT GO.

STOP IT.
I WAS WANDERING THROUGH THIS TOWN WHEN CONSUMPTION STRUCK ME.
I WANTED TO START A SCHOOL OF MY OWN... RUN MY OWN DOJO, BUT... IT DIDN'T WORK OUT.
Koff
AND NOW... SEE HOW I'VE FALLEN.
IT WAS FATE WE LOST YOUR BROTHER.
AND AFTER YOU AND YOUR MOTHER WENT AWAY, I BROKE WITH THE MUTENICHI-RYŪ.
HA HA HA...! FUNNY, ISN'T IT...?
THERE WASN'T A DAY GONE BY I DIDN'T DREAM YOU'D SOMEHOW HEAR ABOUT ME, AND COME HELP.
ALONE... ALONE ALL THESE YEARS. I KNOW I BROUGHT IT ON MYSELF... I KNOW IT WAS SELF-CENTERED OF ME, BUT... BUT...
STOP IT!!
AHH... WHAT A GOOD CHILD. YOU ARE SUCH A GOOD CHILD!

.....
.....
FATHER ...?

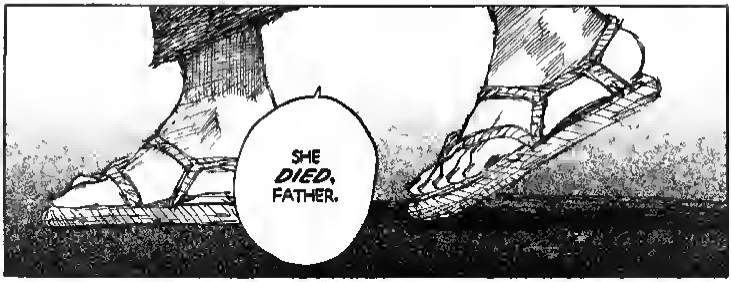
THIS COMB... I'LL TAKE IT.
AND I PROMISE... I'LL GIVE IT TO MOTHER.
ALONG WITH YOUR WORDS.
YOU'VE GROWN UP SO BEAUTI-FUL... JUST LIKE HER!
HA HA... MAKIE!
SO GROW YOUR HAIR OUT, MAKIE!
NEXT TIME YOU COME, I'LL BUY YOU A COMB JUST LIKE HERS!
OHH! YOU WILL?!
OHH... ?!

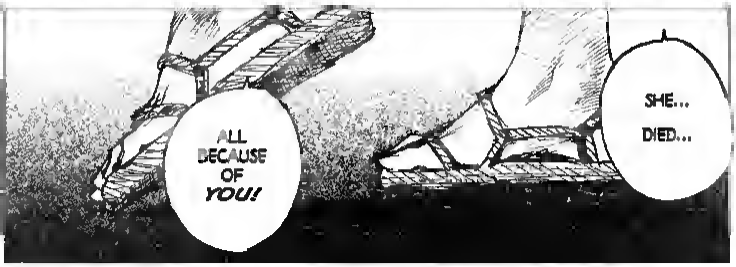
OH! AND HAVE *FUKI* COME WITH YOU! YES!
THAT WOULD BE GOOD! *GOOD!* THERE ARE THING'S I'VE WANTED TO TELL YOU BOTH, FOR TWENTY YEARS...
SO MANY THINGS... A *MOUNTAIN* OF THINGS!

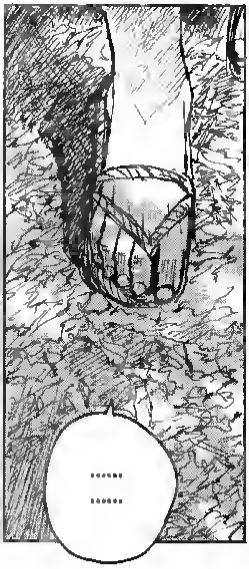
FATHER...
I... HAVE TO GO NOW.
?!
YOU RE... YOU'RE *LEAVING*? ALREADY...?!
D-DON'T BE IN SUCH A *RUSH*...! W-WAIT!
EAT SOMETHING FIRST! I'LL MAKE SOME-THING...

MAKIE!
IF... IF YOU'RE REALLY LEAVING... PROMISE ME.
WHAT YOU SAID...
HAVE FUKI...
...COME BACK TO ME...
YES.
ABSOLUTELY. I...
...I'LL BRING MOTHER. TO THE VILLAGE WHERE MY FATHER LIVES...

FATHER...
MY MOTHER... YOU KNOW WHAT...?


SHE
DIED,
FATHER.


ALL
BECAUSE
OF
YOU!
SHE...
DIED...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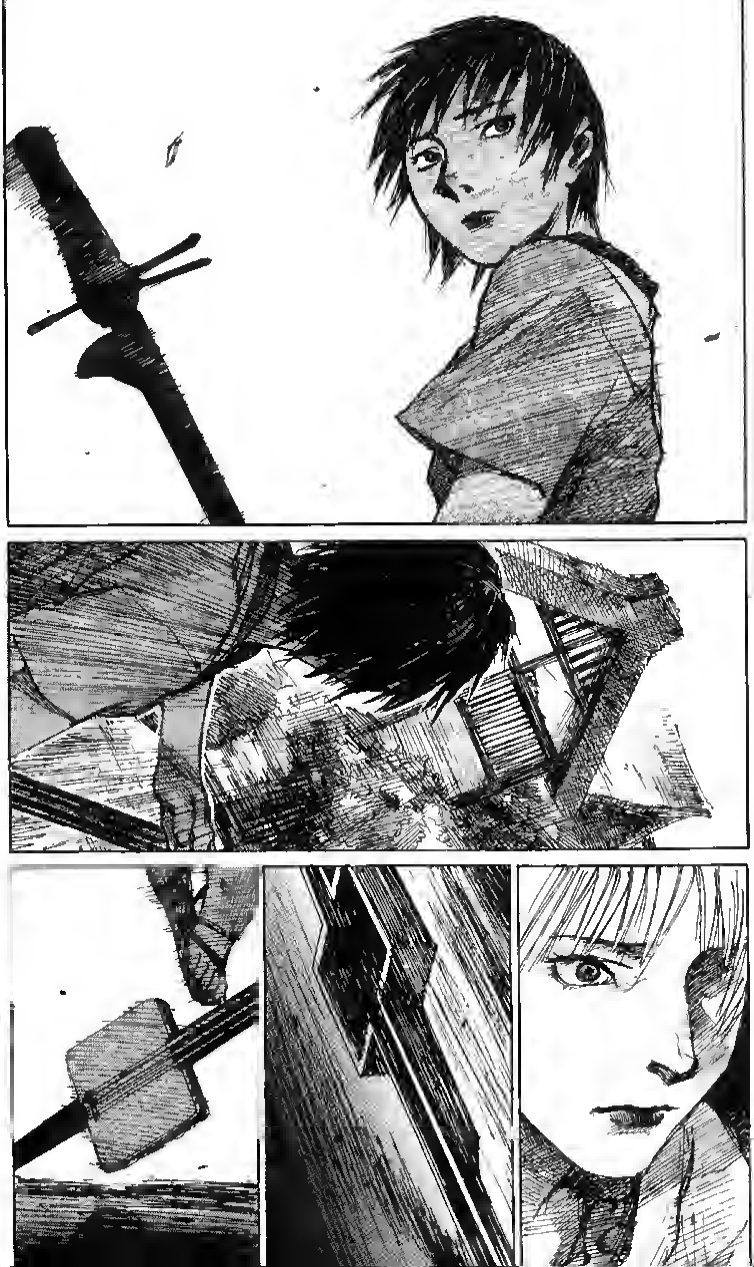
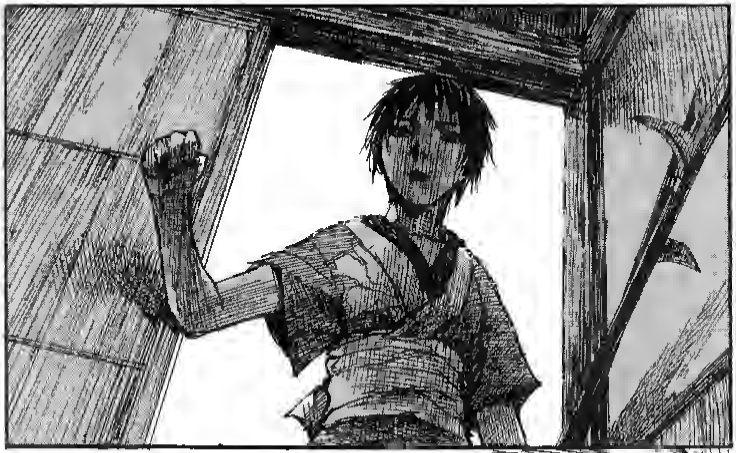


BAM



TO BE CONTINUED...

LETTERS

send letters to:

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www.darkhorse.com • blade@darkhorse.com • www.studioproteus.com

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Manji, has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "welfare" from *su* — "well" + *asti* — "he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune the swastika was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sauvastika*, which moves in a counter-clockwise direction, and is called the manji in Japanese. The *sauvastika* generally stands for night and often for magical practices. The *swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the swastika has ancient and honorable origins and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 16th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910.*

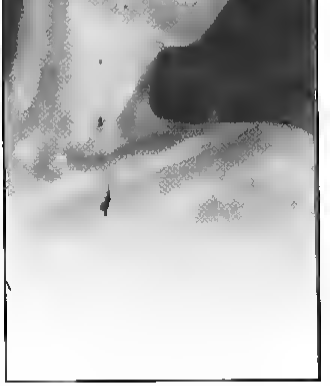
ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork. The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Normally, all of our manga are first copied in a mirror image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this and mirror imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue. Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the untouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

NEXT MONTH:

Mirror of the Soul, Part Three



The "Mirror of the Soul" storyline concludes as Makie, wayward swordswoman of the Itto-ryu, lies emotionally wasted and ready to die. Will her precarious relationship with Anotsu lead her back into the land of the living?